DC

65

CATWOMAN™

HOWARD SHAVRIN

NINE LIVES PART 7

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13+ TEEN

DAWN OF DC

GRAVE DANGER!

Life on Apokolips is hell.
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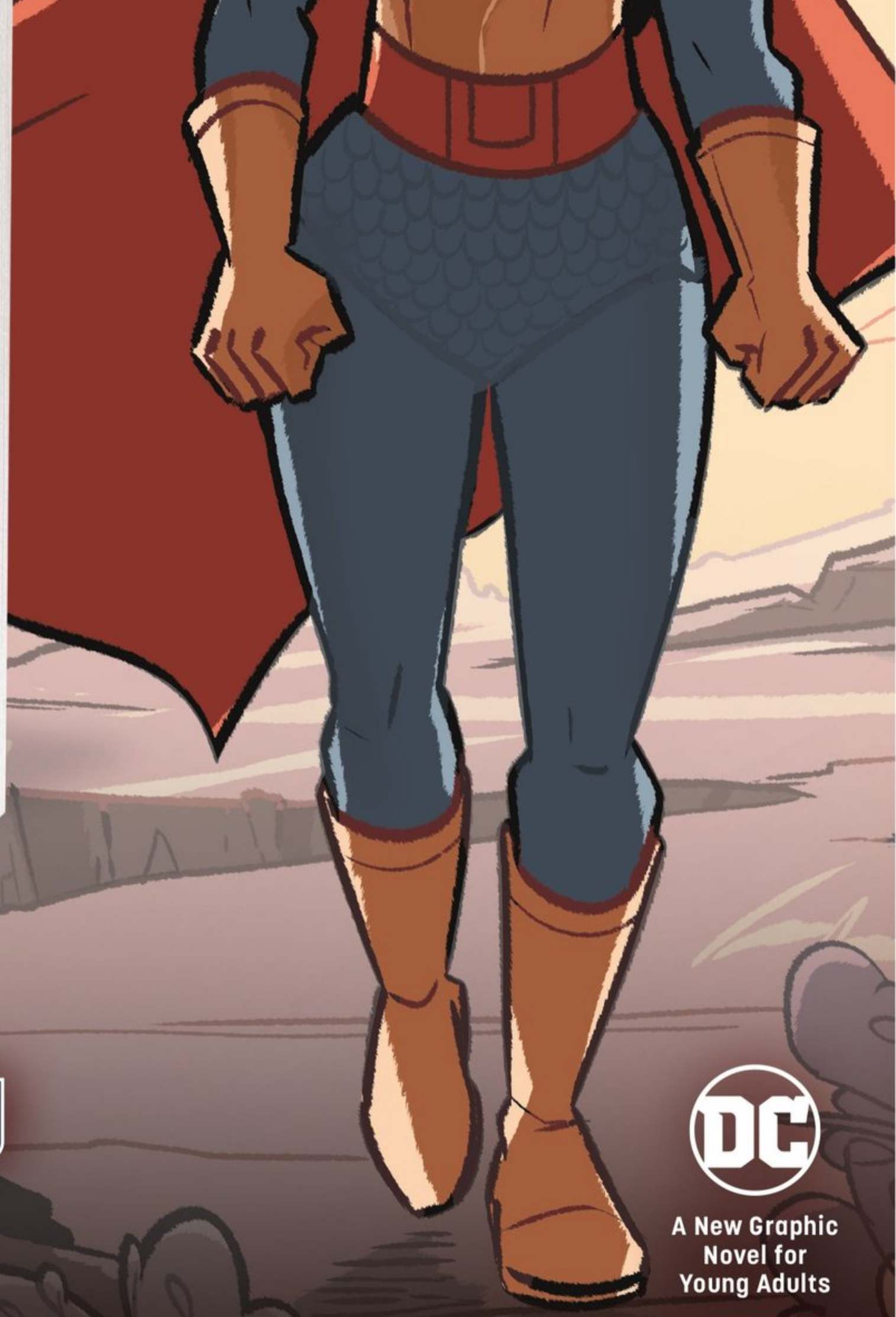

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DC

A New Graphic Novel for Young Adults

JUNE

CLIK

PRRRRRRRRRin—

PRRRRRiNG

WHITESITE TO VICEROY-- TARGET ACQUIRED. WE HAVE THE BODY.

A BODY? YOU'RE SURE. NOT *MOVING OR WIGGLING*--DEAD. NO PULSE?

UHHH, AM I *SURE?*

CLIK

I'LL SEE FOR MYSELF.

G-MEN MUSTA SWUNG IN AND GOT HER FROM THE WRECKAGE BEFORE WE GOT THERE.

ROSIE, YOU'D HAVE TO BE AN *IDIOT* TO BELIEVE SHE WAS DEAD.

SANTA ESPADA, YOU'VE SEEN HER RUN THROUGH?

FLAMINGO, SHE WAS BLOWN TO PIECES IN AN AUTO ACCIDENT? BY NOW SHE SHOULD HAVE BEEN *IRRADIATED, SLASHED* TO PIECES, AND *BURNT* ALIVE.

HA HAHAHA! SHE DESERVED IT ALL AND MORE!

WE WANT TO CONSIDER OURSELVES AMONG THE WORLD'S *GREATEST THIEVES*--OUR OBJECTIVES ARE MORE POWERFUL THAN EVER BEFORE, AND SHE'S MAKING FOOLS OF US!

WE HAVE TO *STILL HER STICKY HANDS!*

I'M A HEALTHY GIRL, VICEROY.

I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO RE-ENTER THE ATMOSPHERE INSIDE ANOTHER SPACE PLANE, AND IT ALMOST KILLED *ME.*

THAT SKINNY LITTLE @#$%? IN THE VACUUM OF SPACE?

...YOU THINK SHE COULD HAVE *LIVED?*

IT'S STUPID TO THINK SHE *DIDN'T.*

THIS IS VICEROY. PREPARE MY HELICOPTER.

ZCLik

DT

"...I'M *TELLIN'* YOU...

"ME AND *THE DEMOLITION CREW* WENT BACK TO THE SITE AS SOON AS WE ALL REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS--

"--I MEAN, WE WERE *BARELY* CONSCIOUS, BUT WE WENT RIGHT BACK OUT THERE TO SEE IF ANYTHING WAS WORTH GRABBING. THERE WAS NOTHIN' THERE OF VALUE, AND *NO DEAD WOMAN."*

WHEN IT COMES TO CATWOMAN, I *BELIEVE* ONLY WHAT I *SEE.*

"I'M ON MY WAY TO SEE THIS CORPSE FOR MYSELF."

I NEED TO GO BACK.

THAT CRASH WASN'T SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN LIKE THAT. I NEED TO GET A MESSAGE TO SOMEONE, AND I HAVE PEOPLE IN GOTHAM WHO NEED--

YOU MAY SEND MESSAGES NO MORE, SELINA. YOU ARE DEAD.

YOU ARE WITH ME, IN THE *DUAT*. A WORLD JUST LIKE YOUR OWN, BUT A REALM APART. WHERE *GHOSTS* FIND THEIR WAY THROUGH THE WORLD *BENEATH* YOUR OWN LIVES.

THE UNDER-SKY WHERE THE SUN TRAVELS AT NIGHT.

THIS ISN'T WHERE I NEED TO BE. I WANT TO GO BACK, *NOW*. I'M NOT DONE.

NO ONE EVER IS.

WE HAD A DEAL, KIT. BETTER THAN MOST.

I'M TIRED OF THIS GAME! I HAD A CHANCE TO BE A ***RELIGIOUS GIRL*** WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, AND I GAVE IT UP.

YOU KNOW ***WHY?***

BECAUSE I DON'T LIKE BEING TOLD WHAT TO DO BY AN ***ABSENTEE AUTHORITY.*** I WANT TO LIVE AND DIE ON MY ***OWN DAMN TERMS!***

I DON'T LIKE ***RULES*** AND I DON'T LIKE ***BEING TESTED!***

...TESTED.

I AM NOT THAT KIND OF ***GOD.***

I AM OF ***OLD.*** BACK WHEN THERE WERE MORE GODS IN THE DUAT THAN ***MEN ON EARTH.*** WE ***WAITED*** FOR MORTALS...

...THOSE WHO SHOW ***PROMISE.***

WE HAVE EONS OF PATIENCE FOR THOSE WHO HAVE EARNED OUR BLESSINGS.

--AND IT IS OUR JOB TO DECIDE WHEN THEY ARE ***MOST NEEDED.***

THESE LIVES WERE NOT TO BE SQUANDERED SO YOU COULD FIND YOURSELF.

YOU, CATWOMAN, ARE ALREADY FOUND.

THE FIRST *HEROES* WERE SIMPLY THIS--MORTALS SENT INTO THE WORLD WITH THE TOUCH OF A GOD.

BUT I DO NOT SEEK THE HEROICS OF *MOST.*

I SEEK THOSE WHO MOVE IN SHADOW, WHO PROTECT THE WEAK, WHO *LOVE THOSE UNSEEN BY MOST.*

WOMEN WHO SUFFER, CHILDREN WHO CRY, CATS WHO *HUNGER.* THESE ARE *YOUR OWN.*

NO MORE *SPENDING YOUR LIVES LIKE COINS.*

BUT YOU, PRECIOUS CAT OF MINE, ARE A *DIAMOND.* NOW THAT YOU *KNOW THIS TO BE TRUE...*

"...I WILL GIVE YOU ONE MORE CHANCE."

GASP!

CATWOMAN

NINE LIVES PART 7

TINI HOWARD STORY
IVAN SHAVRIN ART AND COLORS
LUCAS GATTONI LETTERS
DAVID NAKAYAMA COVER
PABLO "LOBOS" VILLALOBOS & RACHTA LIN VARIANT COVERS
OTTO SCHMIDT 1:25 VARIANT COVER
ELIZA IVANOVA 1:50 VARIANT COVER
JAMES REID ASSISTANT EDITOR
ARIANNA TURTURRO EDITOR
KATIE KUBERT GROUP EDITOR

Body fridge.

I must've still been dead when they found me.

BAM!

One more death and I'm **out.**

Just like everyone else...but I'm too far along now to go home. Things are just getting good.

GASP

That's the problem with gods. You start making and taking deals, and things get stranger and stranger.

No gear.

With what I got from the satellite, I can handle removing any digital records, but I'll need whatever's left of my gear to make sure there's **no evidence** I was ever here.

And if I need to get out of here with **nothing,** well...I'm glad I've got the gown.

Lucky me, I'm waking up in the **morgue.**

Morgues always have the **worst** security.

Ask me how I know.

My old friend, SCANDAL SAVAGE.

HONEY BUNS

Back when she was known as Marquise, we were the best of friends in Gotham lockup. With her metahuman strength, she could get beat nearly to death and come back swinging.

But then came a job from her father, Vandal Savage, and we found ourselves on opposite sides of the Gotham War.

Scandal didn't want to wrong me--she hates her dad as much as we all do.

It was too late when I met her. She was already in her father's pocket, and it was too late to get out.

But now she's out of the game, and I need a friend with some **time to kill...**

It looks like a CIA black site--someone must have picked me up when they came to claim the rest of the classified plane.

But this place doesn't **feel** like it's run by the U.S. government. Get thrown in a couple of international jails, come back, and tell me I'm wrong. They've each got a **flavor all their own.**

But there are **some** constants...

MORGUE

STORAGE

...guards never look **up.**

Cameras seem to be surveillance only, not hooked up to record.

I see no electronic locks, hear no hum of servers. Even most U.S. black sites have a **computer.** **Strange...**

crk

SSSSHHH-SH-SH--

Hrrkk...

So maybe I **don't** know who runs this prison, but if they're hiding it like this, it must be bad.

Everything looks **analog.** Keys with mechanical locks, cameras that monitor but don't film, and filing cabinets with prisoner records.

They can deny they ever existed with a **well-timed fire** to burn the place to ash.

Mutually assured nonexistence--this place didn't exist and I wasn't here--**so long as I can clean up the paper trail.**

I need my stuff, and I need to be a ghost.

Lord, it smells **bad** in this helmet.

Like literal **death.**

?!

It's the first thing here to send chills down my spine--and I woke up in the **freezer.**

WHO'S *THAT?*

I KNOW EVERY WOMAN WHO WORKS HERE. I DON'T KNOW *HER.*

Time to go fishing...

NEVER MIND, I'LL GO TALK TO HER--!

...aaand we got a bite.

HEY, COMMANDO, FALL BACK. GOTTA JOB FOR YOU.

I'M UNDER STRICT ORDERS--

WHAT, CAUSE OF OL' *WHITEY WASP* VISITING?

HEY-EY, C'MON, DON'T BE SO STUCK UP--SHE'S STILL ON HER WAY!

--WHITEY WASP?

SHE HAS TEN NAMES, I CAN'T KEEP THEM STRAIGHT!

WHAT WAS YOUR JOB FOR ME?

STORAGE. CONTRABAND. BRING BACK SOMETHING *FUN* FOR ME AND MY PALS AND YOU WON'T HAVE TO PATROL ALL ALONE, NEWB.

I DON'T THINK--

THAT'S RIGHT, YOUR JOB ISN'T TO *THINK.* IT'S TO *TAKE ORDERS.* NOW...YOU KNOW WHERE YOU'RE GOING?

PRETEND I *DON'T.*

THAT WAY. *ATTAGIRL.*

SOMEONE JUST FOUND COMMANDO BRADLEY-- *WITHOUT HIS GEAR.*

LIKE HE GOT JUMPED?!

VICEROY IS FIVE MINUTES OUT.

Haven't found my stuff, but every one of these boxes is telling me something, whether it means to or not. After all, paper records mean a sign-off, and--

--VERONICA VICEROY, THE Sea Wasp.

Of course. She's still chapped at me over blowing up her **underwater base.**

But nothing about this feels like **NEMO** work. It's pretty **dry,** for one, and the bad smell in the mask wasn't **fishy.**

SNAP!

It's in **tatters,** but it's mine.

click

HEY, YOU'RE TAKING TOO @$#%*& LONG, NEWBIE--

WANG

UNH--! BACCKKHHUP--

BAM!

UNGH!

COMMANDER VICEROY IS APPROACHING THE HELIPAD.

WHATEVER'S GOING ON DOWN THERE, GET THE MORGUE PREPPED FOR HER ARRIVAL **NOW**--

--AND **FIND THAT MISSING DEAD BODY!**

WE'RE APPREHENDING THE A.W.O.L. GUARD NOW AND THEN WILL LOCK IN ON THE BODY, SIR.

EXIT

HEY YOU DON'T THINK... MAYBE... THE BODY AND THE INTRUDER ARE THE *SAME*--

I SEE HER! **FIRE!**

BDDD BRATTL

BRAATT

BRAT TAT

TAK

#@%%!

WHITE GLOVE ACTUAL, LOCK DOWN FACILITY NOW!

WHITE GLOVE? IS THAT WHAT VICEROY'S CALLING HERSELF?

WHHK-KAK

YOU HAVE FIVE SECONDS TO TELL ME EVERYTHING.

WOMAN TO WOMAN. I'M GIVING YOU A *SHOT.*

I *CAN'T* DO THAT.

CAN'T, OR *WON'T?*

--A-ARTIFACT ACQUISITION. SHE'S IN THE GAME OF--

BLAM BLAM BLAM

SSSS!

I DON'T GET IT--SHE WAS IN THE *MORGUE!*

THEN THE BOSSES WERE *RIGHT* ABOUT HER...

I can't just bail out without making sure I've gotten ***any*** *record of me here.*

Gotta admit, my ears perked up at "artifact acquisition."

According to what I saw, this is **her** project. Not some NEMO offsite.

Something's **weird** about this place. It's like a black site as written by **Mary Shelley.** Everything feels cold, clammy.

Every guard looks ten seconds from keeling over, like they're slowly dying, but they act **fine...**

Viceroy wanted me in the fridge not just as evidence--she wanted it to **imprison me.**

She's **mad** that I've noticed her, and if she claims to be **hoarding artifacts--**

--I can see **why.**

Oh, Veronica.

We could maybe get along...if you weren't so greedy.

Everything in here is far more valuable-- and **powerful**--than any covert space plane.

These aren't just **museum** artifacts--they're more than that.

These artifacts have **power.** Real power, the kind people used to use **before** they had missiles and money.

The kind that has controlled the world before and will continue to, in the shadows.

The kind that **no one** should hold on to for long.

There are two kinds of thieves in this world. Those that **want** things they **shouldn't** have...

...and the ones like **me** who play **keep-away** from **those types.**

...NNRR-RUHH...

CREAK

LEEEAAAAAVE...

OHHH, I DON'T THINK I CAN FLIRT MY WAY PAST YOU...

Undead. That's the smell.

Viceroy's no sorcerer, but the danger with artifacts is that you don't need to be. Enormous power beyond your understanding, and all you need to do is call it yours.

Like the power of life and death over your soldiers.

WHAP!

Serious hits. He feels nothing.

I wonder if this is the future for our guard friends back there, and if they're excited about it.

GAAAK...!

RRRH!

AHH--!

Or if it's my future--

--if I stick around.

NGGHHH-- CRUUUSH--

HAAAH--

TINK

AAUGH--FIIIIRE BAD!

WHOOOM

He can't feel hits, but he can feel **fear.**

If I can scare him into escaping, I can follow his exit.

Viceroy wants to deny her **White Glove** facility ever existed?

ARRRGH!

Well, here's that **well-timed fire.** I'm **happy** to destroy these records-- I'm in there somewhere too.

NNNOOo--!

I feel a little bad for him. But what's to be done? He's out of lives.

I've still got one to fight for.

TRANCOSO, BRAZIL.

It's a fifty-hour bus ride from Nevada to **Brazil.** It's not glamorous, but in this day and age, it's the **most anonymous** way to travel.

KNOCK KNOCK!

HI-- YOU MUST BE *KNOCKOUT?*

NO, ACTUALLY, I'M *LIANA.*

OH! I'M SORRY, I--

HAPPENS ALL THE TIME.

KAAAAY! IT WAS FOR *YOU--*

--YOU *OWE ME* TEN BUCKS.

TAKE IT FROM SCANDAL'S WALLET, IT'S IN HER PANTS... SOMEWHERE.

CATWOMAN.

SO NICE OF YOU TO STALK ME HERE. DO YOU HAVE A *HOUSEWARMING* GIFT FOR ME AND THE *WIVES?*

OR--

--ARE YOU *HERE TO FIGHT?!*

STALKED YOU?! I ASKED JEANNETTE!

YOU BETRAYED *ME,* SCANDAL! LET'S MAKE THAT *PERFECTLY* CLEAR.

FWING

YOU DIDN'T EVEN *TRY* TO COUNTEROFFER MY @#$%@# DAD--DON'T ACT LIKE WE'RE FRIENDS. YOU THREW ME TO HIM LIKE *CHUM* TO COZY UP TO *BATMAN.*

YOU'RE MAD BECAUSE I DIDN'T *RESCUE YOU* FROM YOUR *FATHER?* DO IT YOURSELF.

SOME *HERO FOR WOMEN YOU ARE.*

I'VE GOT A FAMILY TO KEEP SAFE, *FAR* AWAY FROM THE GRASP OF THAT @#$%@#$.

HE'S GONNA OUTLIVE ME, SO THE WAY I STAY AWAY FROM HIM IS *APPEASING* HIM AND *TAKING HIS MONEY.*

WE DON'T ALL HAVE A RICH BOYFRIEND TO PUT US UP.

WHACK!

...WE EVEN YET?

YES. AND I'VE GOT AN OFFER.

SOMETHING THAT CAN KEEP *EVERYONE* HAPPY, AND YOU OUT OF YOUR FATHER'S GRASP. YOU WANTED TO KEEP WORKING WITH ME?

I'M HERE TO GET TO WORK.

...MEET ME ON THE BALCONY. DON'T WANNA TROUBLE LI AND KAY ANY MORE THAN YOU ALREADY HAVE.

SO WHERE'VE *YOU* BEEN?
LIVING AND DYING AGAIN AND AGAIN.
STANDARD SUPERHERO CRAP.
...M'NOT A HERO.
I NEED A CREW OF THIEVES. *STRONG* ONES. STRONGER THAN WHAT WE BUILT IN GOTHAM-- I NEED INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONALS.
WHAT'S IN THE BAG? LOOKS LIKE YOU LIFTED IT FROM A GIFT SHOP.
THEY'RE NO JOKE. THEY CAME FROM A PRIVATELY OWNED BLACK SITE.
WHAT ARE YOU COLLECTING THEM FOR? SELLING TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER? I'M NOT REALLY IN THE *FENCING* BUSINESS.
I'M KEEPING THEM OUT OF AN ENEMY'S HANDS. SHE'S TRYING TO BUILD A NETWORK OF THIEVES, AND I CAN'T LET HER DO THAT.
ARTIFACTS AS SUPERWEAPONS? WE CAN'T LET HER GET THAT KIND OF POWER.
DING
DING
DING
WHY THE SUDDEN INTEREST IN MAGICAL THINGS, SELINA? YOU KNOW THIS WORLD RUNS ON *MONEY*, AND IT'S NOT EVEN BACKED BY *GOLD* ANYMORE.
BECAUSE, SCANDAL...
...SHE WANTS TO THINK SHE CAN CONTROL THIEVES FOR HER OWN MEANS? WE NEED TO SHOW HER THE TRUTH--WE DO THIS FOR THE *RUSH*, NOT THE *POWER*.

SO YOU WANNA TAKE HER DOWN BEFORE WE'VE GOT ANOTHER AMANDA WALLER TYPE ON OUR HANDS? I'M IN. I *TOLD* YOU I LIKED WORKING WITH YOU.

ONYX, EIKO, AND THE KID, TOO.

THEY'RE IN GOTHAM RIGHT NOW, KEEPING THE THINGS THERE I CARE ABOUT *SAFE.* THAT'S WHY I NEED YOU.

TING

THESE ARE MY NEXT TWO RECRUITS. FROM WHAT I CAN TELL-- THEY'RE VICEROY'S RIGHT AND LEFT HAND...BUT THEY HAVEN'T BEEN FOR LONG. I CAN *STEAL THEM TOO.*

WELL I RECOGNIZE *ONE* OF THEM...

WHEN I GOT VICEROY'S FILE ON ME I GOT SOMETHING ELSE--A WINDOW INTO HER MIND, AND IT LED ME RIGHT TO HER PLAN.

FOUND TWO PHOTOS OF ME, EACH WITH A FORMER *SCORE*-- AND I THOUGHT-- WHY *THESE TWO?*

BECAUSE THOSE ARE HER NEW *THIEVES.*

V. Vicero

V. Vic

AND WE'RE GOING TO STEAL THEM *RIGHT OUT FROM UNDER HER.*

NEXT: THE DOUBLE DOUBLE-CROSS!

DC Comics Presents

RAMONA & ME

Brittany Holzherr Writer **June Brigman** Penciller **Roy Richardson** Inker **Trish Mulvihill** Colorist **Janice Chiang** Letterer

ONE OF THE BEST THINGS ABOUT WORKING IN COMICS IS DISCOVERING ASPECTS OF ITS HISTORY YOU NEVER KNEW BEFORE. SOME PEOPLE SAY WOMEN ARE FINALLY MAKING THEIR PRESENCE KNOWN, BUT THEY COULDN'T BE MORE WRONG. WOMEN HAVE ***ALWAYS*** BEEN IN COMICS-- YOU JUST NEEDED TO KNOW WHERE TO LOOK.

BACK IN 2017, OUR EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, MARIE JAVINS, FOUND HERSELF AT BALTIMORE COMIC-CON IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LEGENDARY ***RAMONA FRADON,*** WHO WAS DELIGHTING CROWDS OF FANS WITH HER COMMISSIONS.

RAMONA WAS JUST ABOUT TO TURN 91 AND HADN'T LOST A STEP IN HER ART. MARIE AND I IMMEDIATELY AGREED THAT RAMONA SHOULD BE WORKING AT DC AGAIN. AN EMAIL LED TO A PHONE CALL AND THE REST WAS HISTORY.

ALWAYS PROMPT BUT HER OWN WORST CRITIC, RAMONA CONSISTENTLY APOLOGIZED FOR HER "LAZINESS" EVEN AS SHE WOULD IMMEDIATELY TURN IN SKETCHES FOR REVIEW ALONG WITH A HILARIOUS POLITICAL CARTOON. I COULDN'T HELP BUT RUN THE ART AROUND THE OFFICE AND SHARE IN LAUGHS WITH MY COWORKERS AS WE MARVELED AT HER TALENT.

COVID CAME AND TURNED THE WORLD AND COMICS UPSIDE DOWN. AS MUCH AS THE PANDEMIC TORE US APART, IT ALSO BROUGHT SOME OF US CLOSER, SERVING AS A REMINDER OF HOW IMPORTANT COMPANIONSHIP IS.

RAMONA AND I STAYED IN TOUCH AND EVENTUALLY SHE INVITED ME OVER. IN ANTICIPATION, I ASKED HER IF SHE MISSED ANY FOOD FROM HER TIME LIVING IN MANHATTAN. SHE IMMEDIATELY ASKED FOR A SPECIFIC DESSERT. TO SATISFY HER FAMOUS SWEET TOOTH, I DROVE UPSTATE WITH SFOGLIATELLA IN HAND.

RAMONA GREETED ME LIKE A ***LONG-LOST FRIEND,*** WHICH LED TO MANY MORE VISITS. WE IMMEDIATELY BONDED OVER OUR SHARED LOVE OF COMIC STRIPS AND THE CITY, BUT SOON THE CONVERSATION MOVED PAST COMICS AND ONTO LIFE IN GENERAL.

I WAS DELIGHTED TO DISCOVER THAT RAMONA WASN'T JUST AN ARTIST WITH HER PEN BUT WITH HER ***WORDS*** TOO. HER STORIES PAINTED A PICTURE OF A LIFE LIVED TO ITS FULLEST. AFTER HOURS OF TALKING--WITH OCCASIONAL PAUSES TO GIVE PETS TO HER DOG, CHARLIE--I ALWAYS LEFT RAMONA'S HOME INSPIRED AND REINVIGORATED TO MAKE MY MARK ON THE WORLD OF COMICS LIKE SHE DID.

AT THE BEGINNING OF 2024, RAMONA ANNOUNCED HER FORMAL ***RETIREMENT*** FROM DRAWING AFTER SEVENTY-PLUS YEARS IN THE BUSINESS.

DURING OUR LAST VISIT, I STRUGGLED TO FIND THE RIGHT WORDS TO SAY GOODBYE TO A FRIEND, BUT HER WARM SMILE SERVED AS A COMFORT. WE SPOKE OF THE FUTURE AND HOW EXCITED SHE WAS TO FINALLY SEE ***METAMORPHO*** ON THE BIG SCREEN. I'M SORRY SHE WILL NEVER GET THE CHANCE, BUT I KNOW THE PARTS OF HERSELF SHE POURED INTO HER BELOVED CO-CREATION WILL SHINE THROUGH.

RAMONA WOULD ALWAYS REMARK THAT WOMEN IN COMICS WERE LARGELY OVERLOOKED, BUT WITH STORIES LIKE THIS, I HOPE THEIR MEMORY AND CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE KEPT ALIVE FOR YEARS TO COME.

SEE YOU IN THE FUNNY PAPERS, RAMONA.

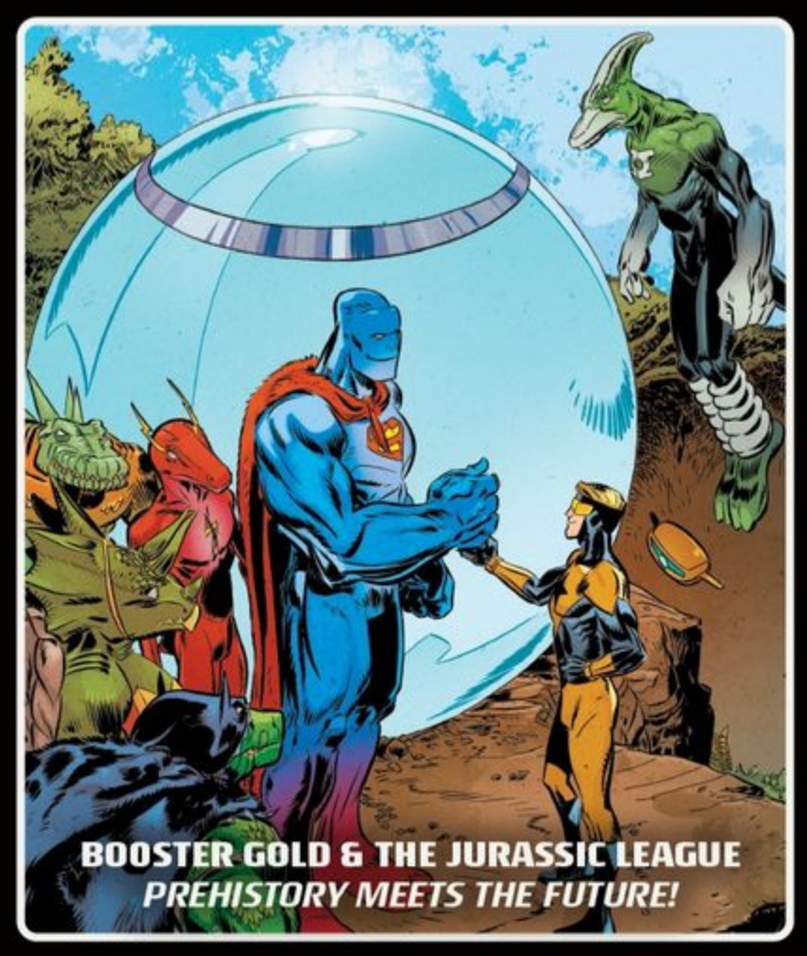
"Mom saw the whole world through her creative imagination. She could make faces and characters from trees or rocks, was awed by light playing on a wall, and saw patterns that I would never have seen. Drawing was her anchor and her best friend. She had beautiful, capable hands that could draw, build, upholster, cook, craft, and comfort. She was my Wonder Woman, for sure." – Amy Fradon

For more quotes remembering Ramona, please visit: DC.com/remembering-ramona

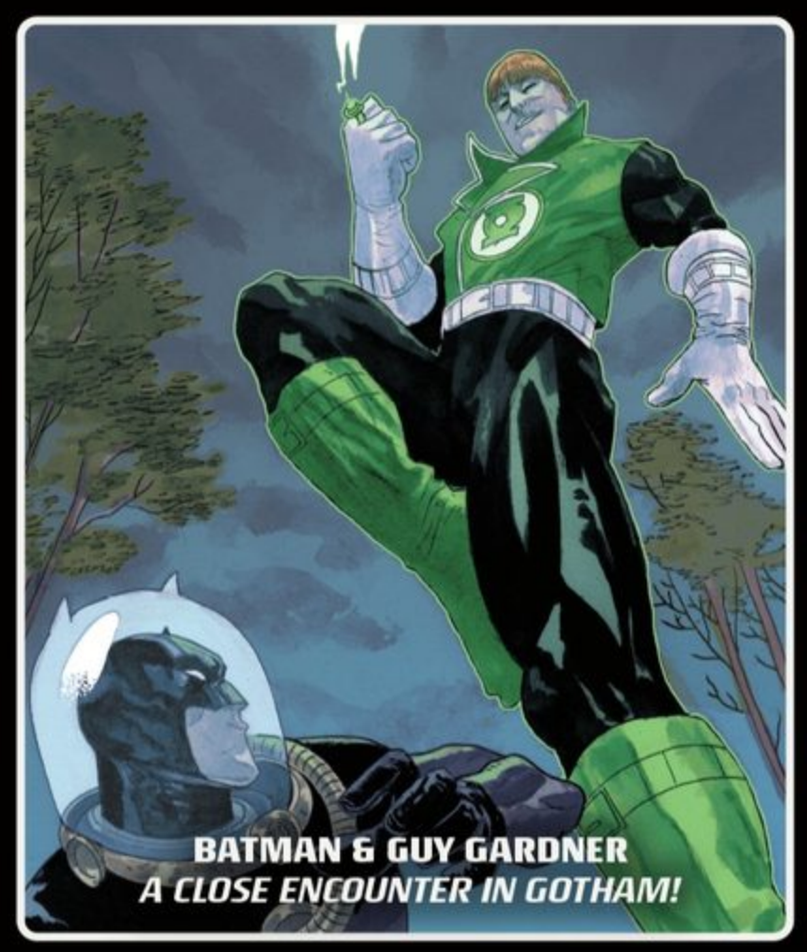
A BOLD NEW DIRECTION FEATURING HEROIC TEAM-UPS!

BATMAN
THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD #13

DEADMAN & NIGHTWING
A NIGHTMARE ROAD TRIP!



BOOSTER GOLD & THE JURASSIC LEAGUE
PREHISTORY MEETS THE FUTURE!



BATMAN & GUY GARDNER
A CLOSE ENCOUNTER IN GOTHAM!

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DC

MAY

DC NATION SPOTLIGHT ON

THE BOY WONDER

INTERVIEW WITH JUNI BA

Visionary writer/artist Juni Ba makes his mark on the timeless story of Batman and Robin in *The Boy Wonder*. When Batman is forced to leave Gotham, a demon begins stalking its dark alleys. Can Damian Wayne learn to battle alongside his adoptive brothers and learn what the mantle of Robin really means? DC Nation sat down with Ba to discuss this five-issue series.

The DCU has such a rich universe of heroes and villains. How did you settle on Robin as the focus for your first story at DC?

I already had ideas for it before DC ever hired me on anything! It was very specifically a personal project of working on a preestablished concept I found interesting. As to why Robin, I think it's because he was the embodiment of the childlike fun at the heart of superheroes. He's a kid who gets to go on crazy adventures with a cool hero, and together they do what's right. This story, though, is about going on adventures with the other child heroes, learning from them, finding solidarity, family, and a way to even surpass the original role your mantle entails.

Why did you specifically choose Damian as the main Robin in *The Boy Wonder*, teaming up with a different former Robin each issue?

Probably because I love him the most. He's such an annoying brat, but also a kid who has to overcome a lot of issues, and I sympathized a lot with that. He's the most recent Robin and he's a great surrogate for the audience to discover this world and his predecessors. And most of all: he's not at all a beacon of perfection like most DC Super Heroes are expected to be, and that makes him a great character to explore this idea of feeling inadequate. Not realizing your own potential as something simply different.

As both a writer and artist, how is your style bringing something to Robin that fans have never seen before?

I think I'm really tapping into a storytelling style that mixes cartoony and character-focused form. It may look cartoony, but I think I managed to find an angle for every team-up story that delves into the complexities of the characters, Damian especially of course, and makes for a great synthesis of these characters for people to discover.

It's designed to be accessible to anyone and especially people with no prior knowledge. So for those who know this world, it's a great summary and a new adventure with some fun twists on familiar things. And for those who don't even know what the Batman world is like, this is for you. You're welcome and encouraged to get in!

DON'T MISS
THE BOY WONDER #1,
ON SALE NOW!

DC BLACK LABEL
Ages 13+

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Empire
Gooba Daddy